

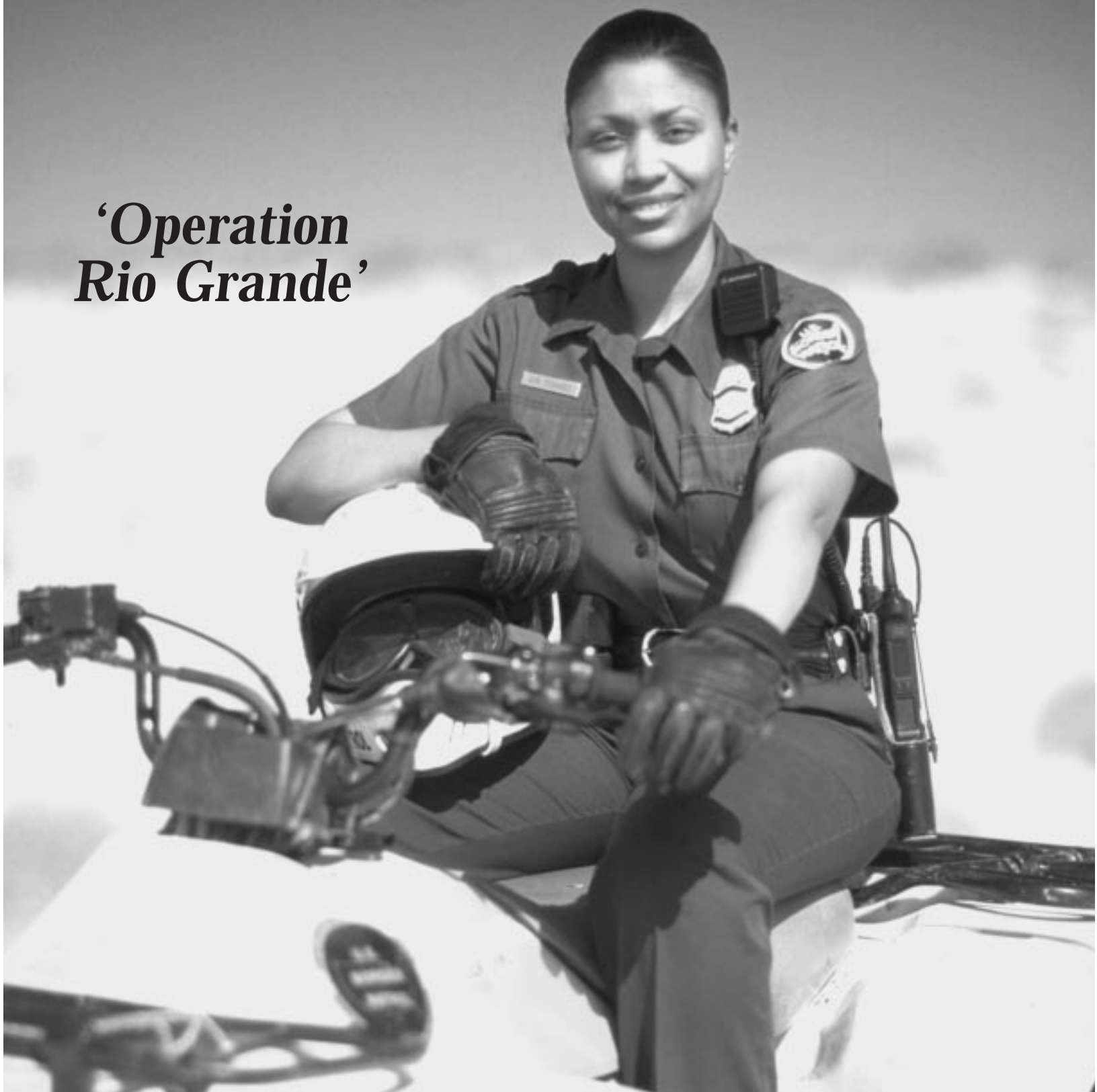


Communi**que** **INS**

Volume 20, Number 9

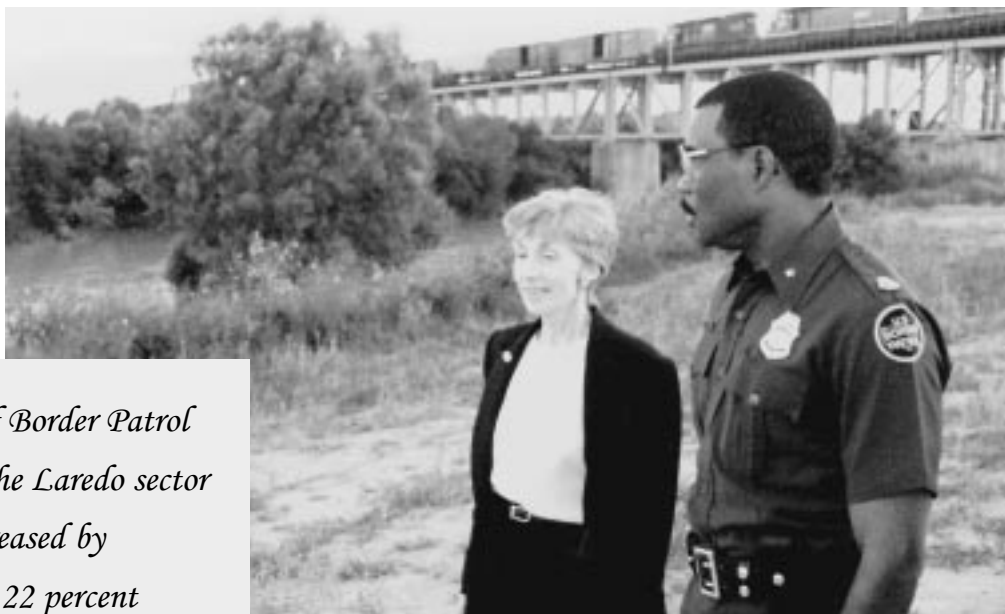
September 1997

‘Operation Rio Grande’



Commissioner Welcomes New Agents

TO LAREDO DURING BORDER TOUR



The number of Border Patrol agents within the Laredo sector has increased by more than 22 percent over the past four years.

Commissioner Meissner listens to border-control strategy suggestions from Sector Chief Luis E. Barker in Laredo, TX, June 26. The Commissioner was in Laredo before she visited McAllen in July to announce the Service's new focus on South Texas and to address questions about changes following implementation of the '96 Act. (Photo by Bill Strassberger, HQ Public Affairs)

Commissioner Meissner visited the Border Patrol's Laredo sector in June, welcoming a group of new agents to their Texas assignments. The Commissioner heralded their arrival at the Texas A&M International University's Great Room as a key element in the agency's multi-year effort to strengthen enforcement of the South Texas border. The new agents are the first of 34 assigned to the sector who are scheduled to arrive by September 30.

The Commissioner echoed a similar message during her visit with Laredo businessmen at a chamber of commerce luncheon hosted in her honor. "We are increasing the number of immigration inspectors at the ports of entry, making more technological resources available for our officers, and expanding our enforcement efforts in South Texas," she explained. Since FY93, INS has increased the number of Border Patrol agents in the state by more than 40 percent, from 1,756 to 2,457. In addition, she said, by the end of FY97, INS will have increased the number of inspectors at Texas

ports of entry by more than 65 percent over FY93 staffing levels, from 412 to 682.

By September 30, the number of Border Patrol agents within the sector will have increased by more than 22 percent over the past four years, from 347 agents at the end of FY93 to 430 agents by the end of this fiscal year. In addition, INS has increased inspector staffing at Laredo's four ports of entry, from 72 positions in FY93 to 124 in FY97—a 72 percent jump.

During her visit, the Commissioner was joined by Laredo Sector Chief Luis E. Barker, San Antonio District Director Ken Pasquarell, Associate Regional Director David Aguilar, Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Richard J. Marroquin Jr., and Port Director Ramon Juarez. She also met with agents at a Laredo North station muster, visited with sector headquarters support staff, joined in a border tour of the sector, and enjoyed the hospitality of the City



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During her recent visit to the Laredo, TX, sector, Commissioner Meissner holds a 'Town Meeting' with Border Patrol agents and other sector employees.

of Laredo at an "Ojo Rojo" welcoming ceremony.

While in Laredo, local civic leaders, educators, and public figures expressed their sentiments to the Commissioner regarding the sector's successes in the community. The sector's Drug Demand Reduction pro-

gram, which coordinates the Head of the Class, Youth of the Month, and Youth of the Year projects, received compliments from Webb County Judge Mercurio Martinez, LISD Superintendent Graciela Ramirez, IBC Executive Vice President Jorge Verduzco, and State Representative Henry Cuellar.



Attending the Commissioner's briefing on new sector resource enhancements were Laredo Sector Chief Luis E. Barker (left) and San Antonio District Director Ken Pasquarell.

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Commissioner Announces Formation of

ANTI-EXPLOITATION TASK FORCE

In the wake of the discovery in New York City of more than 50 deaf and speaking-impaired immigrants living in virtual slavery, Commissioner Meissner has appointed experienced Service investigators and a senior INS field manager to a new National Anti-Exploitation Task Force. "We will examine all possible leads [in these cases] and dismantle any such alien smuggling rings, whether or not they are related to the seven people currently in Federal and city custody for the crimes we have seen in New York," the Commissioner told reporters at a Headquarters press conference July 24.

The Task Force will work directly with U.S. Attorneys around the country to achieve its goals, the Commissioner said.

Richard Cravener, currently the acting district director in Houston, TX, has been appointed by the Commissioner as the temporary director of the Service's new National Anti-Exploitation Task Force. Announced at Headquarters on July 24, the task force's mission will



Richard Cravener

be to coordinate ongoing criminal/administrative cases involving indentured servitude, to coordinate a national intelligence estimate on the scope of the problem, and to develop policy impli-

cations regarding the scope of the problem for INS' enforcement branches. The task force will also formulate the policies needed to address cases of abuse, coercion, and exploitation of immigrants nationwide. Michael Heston, the district director in Kansas City, MO, was assigned as acting district director in Houston while Cravener was on detail at Headquarters.



Commissioner Meissner presents the Service's Statute of Liberty to outgoing U.S. Customs Service Director George Weiss. During the August reception for Weiss at INS Headquarters, the Commissioner stressed the need for continued cooperation between the INS and Customs.

Servicewide Naturalization Reengineering Plan Continuing Implementation of New Process Expected by Late 1998

By Amy Kramer
HQ Office of Examinations

On March 20 Attorney General Janet Reno awarded a two-year contract to Coopers & Lybrand Consulting (C&L) to assist the Service's Office of Naturalization Operations (ONO) in redesigning the naturalization process. The project consists of three phases and is staffed by a team consisting of C&L employees and INS employees from ONO. In the first two phases, Discovery and Redesign, the project team will work together to create a new naturalization process. During the life of the project, the team will examine all aspects of the naturalization program including: technology, organizational culture, communication practices, and organizational structure.

To date, the project team has visited many Service field offices, spoken to management and staff at Headquarters and regional offices and persons seeking or granted naturalization, and has held focus groups with Congressional staffers and community-based organizations. It has also coordinated activities with other new Service initiatives, such as the expansion of direct mail and records centralization.

Based on what they discovered, the project team is designing a new naturalization process, and will use feedback from ONO to make recommendations about the new process throughout implementation. Introduction and training in the new process and procedures will begin in late 1997, and it is expected that all naturalization sites will

have implemented the new process by December 1998.

Robert Bratt, executive director of naturalization operations, is committed to the successful implementation of this new naturalization process. "The new process," he said recently, "will improve both system integrity, and our ability to respond flexibly to the needs of our customers."

Addressing the project in July, Commissioner Meissner said, "We believe that a reengineered naturalization program will enable the Service to meet its dual goals of safeguarding the integrity of the citizenship process while ensuring that our customers receive effective and timely consideration of their applications."

Update: First Three Months of Expedited Removals

Preliminary figures show that 1,200 people per week who have entered the 25 busiest U.S. ports since April 1 have been subjected to expedited removal proceedings as mandated by the '96 Act. Figures further show that 80 percent of the cases occurred along the southwest border and that approximately five percent of the total were referred to a specially trained INS officer for a "credible fear" hearing.

The figures were released at an INS media briefing at Headquarters July 9. Phyllis Coven, director of the Office of International Affairs, and Bo Cooper of the Office of General Counsel conducted the briefing.

A third of the aliens entering the process were permitted to withdraw their applications for admission, and were removed from the United States without incurring the penalties associated with a formal order of removal, Coven said. She said this illustrates "our agents are using this new authority cautiously and prudently." While the majority were Mexican nationals, more than 60 different nationalities were represented by the aliens entering the expedited process.

According to Coven, 20 percent of all airport arrivals involving expedited removals were referred to an asylum officer for a credible fear hearing. She said this too makes sense because most aliens who arrive from abroad and seek asylum come by air.



Phyllis Coven, director of International Affairs, and Bo Cooper, chief of the Refugee and Asylum Law Division in the Office of General Counsel, brief the media on the Service's progress on expedited removals at land and air ports of entry.

"The preliminary signs," Coven concluded, "are that we have created a good program that is working well."

Further updates are expected in the near future.

Operation Rio Grande Announced in Brownsville, TX

NEW INITIATIVE FOLLOWS CALIFORNIA'S OPERATION GATEKEEPER

In a July 26 press event held in Brownsville, TX, and attended by U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Commissioner Meissner announced the implementation of 'Operation Rio

Commissioner said, will be an intensive move to step up enforcement in the Brownsville area, with 69 new Border Patrol agents being detailed on August 25

depending on when newly trained agents are available, she said.

The operation will divide Texas and New Mexico into three main corridors and encompass five Border Patrol sectors: McAllen/Laredo, Del Rio/Laredo, and El Paso. Control of the border will be maintained with increased permanent staff (2,700 agents are scheduled to be in Texas by the end of FY97), and through technology and lighting improvements and enhanced detention and removal capabilities.

Specifically, Operation Rio Grande will include the following personnel and technology resources:

- Overtime budgeted for increased patrols for extended periods—an additional 168 shifts per week;
- Special response teams deployed to ports of entry in



A Border Patrol agent checks the fence in El Paso.

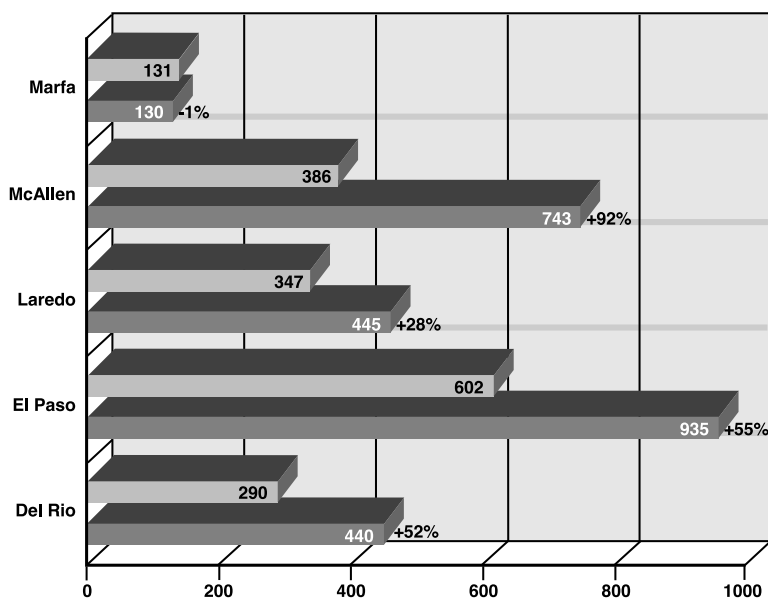
Grande,' the Texas and New Mexico sectors' equivalent of Operation Gatekeeper in Southern California.

The first step in the new multi-year operation, the

to "bolster the Patrol's agent line of force."

These detailed agents would be replaced by permanent staff between October of this year and January 1988

Border Patrol Staffing in Texas and New Mexico, FY94-97



INS Communique

anticipation of increasing numbers of fraudulent entry documents;

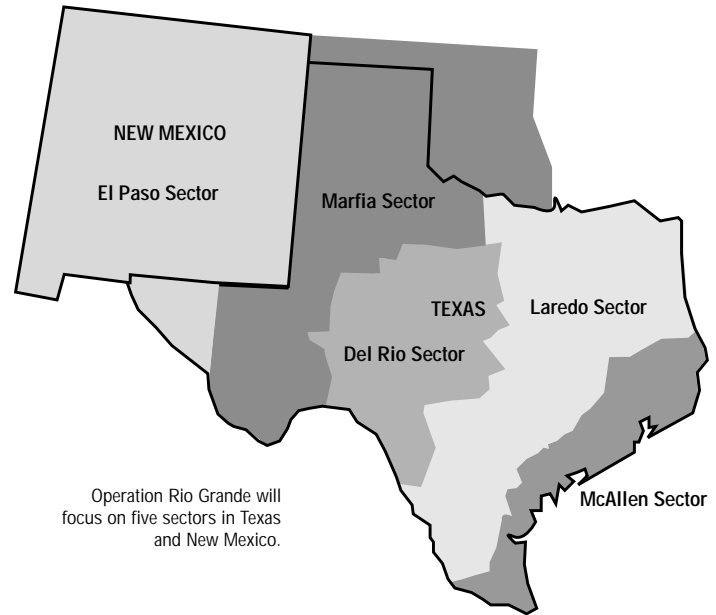
- Bed space increases for detained aliens;
- Electronic sensors, night scopes, and day scopes for towers added;
- IDENT systems installed;
- Additional night vision goggles distributed to agents;
- Portable lighting in certain areas installed; and
- Low-light television used to monitor known hot spots.

"Four years ago we were a nation that had lost control of our borders," Commissioner Meissner said during the announcement in Brownsville. "With strong support from Congress, we have begun attacking the problem head-on and developing a multi-year, comprehensive strategy to gain control of the most heavily trafficked corridors...from Texas to California."



The IDENT system captures the attention of Commissioner Meissner and Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison at the Brownsville POE, where they announced Operation Rio Grande at a joint press conference. (Still video clip by Chuck Reed, Central Region Public Affairs)

Among the enhancements of Operation Rio Grande will be increases in the number of vehicles on the line.



She stressed that "by employing tactics to achieve control through deterrence, a key component of our strategy," illegal crossings in El Paso, TX, have been reduced by almost 50 percent, while apprehensions in the San Diego sector—which once represented nearly half of all cases nationwide—have dropped from 45 to 30 percent of the Southwest border total.

"We are all here today talking about how...we can improve the quality of life for people living in communities along the Texas and New Mexico border," the Commissioner said. "I am confident [that they] as well as [those residents] in Mexico will experience substantial improvements...as we gain and maintain control of illegal immigration."



News Briefs

INS Signs Multifaceted MOA with Army Corp of Engineers

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) and INS have entered into a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under which the USACE, through its Architect Engineer Resource Center in Fort Worth, TX, will manage INS services including real estate acquisition; leasing and appraisals; planning and site assessments; environmental protection such as hazardous substance remediation; design and cost engineering; construction; and occupancy services including physical move coordination.

At a formal signing ceremony at INS Headquarters July 24, INS Executive Associate Commissioner for Management George Bohlinger told USACE General Henry S. Miller that "INS is growing, and as we add people they have got to have facilities and places to work. We know that the task is monumental, but I am sure from the amount of work that has gone into [this MOA], it will be a success." Bohlinger added, "Working with the Army Corp of Engineers has always been a

delightful experience, and you have always been important to INS."

According to David Yentzer, assistant commissioner for Administration, who signed the MOA for INS, construction needs within the Service have "grown exponentially" in the past few years. Funds obligated by INS for construction projects topped \$100 million last year and are expected to grow to more than \$168 million by FY99.



Attending the signing of the memorandum of agreement at INS Headquarters were (l. to r.) Executive Associate Commissioner for Management George Bohlinger; Rufus F. Johnson, acting director, Facility and Engineering Division; Brigadier General Henry S. Miller; Eric Viewers, assistant director, Facility and Engineering Division; Ralph E. Barrett, director, A+E Resource Center; INS Assistant Commissioner for Administration David A. Yentzer; Richard J. Diefenbeck, acting director, Procurement Division; and ACOE Col. Peter Madsen.

INS Partners with EEOC in Employment Project

INS and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) have formed a partnership to monitor the Service's Employment Verification Pilot (EVP) Project in Southern California.

A fact sheet on the partnership, released by Headquarters in mid-July, explained, "The Administration has a two-fold commitment to ensuring that U.S. jobs are filled by autho-

rized workers and to enforcing our nation's anti-discrimination laws.... Because discrimination may occur at almost any stage of the employment process, the discriminatory impact of the pilot program has been a critical concern for INS from the very beginning."

The pilot program was developed through an inter-agency working group headed by the Chairman of the EEOC and the U.S. Depart-

ment of Health and Human Services Director of the Office of Civil Rights. Its purpose is to avoid discrimination during the hiring process and to evaluate potentially discriminatory factors.

Through the partnership, INS will reimburse the EEOC \$50,000 to cover the costs of collecting and assessing data. The EEOC is expected to report on its findings in the fall.

Laredo Cocaine Seizure is Second Largest in Sector History

The driver of a 1993 Freightliner tractor got some very bad news when trying to pass through the Laredo North Border Patrol station in mid-July. After a K-9 alerted on the load he was hauling, station agents identified and seized his illegal cargo: over 1,100 packages of cocaine packed in 38 cardboard boxes and valued at over \$106 million.

The seizure was the second-largest in the history of the Laredo sector, with the largest ever—over 4,500 lbs.—made in January at the Freer station. Following the seizure, the driver, his vehicle, and the cocaine were turned over to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The 1,100 packages of cocaine seized are valued at over \$106 million.



Videophones Improve Boat Inspection Process

INS' Buffalo district office is using videophones to facilitate small boat inspections at the Clayton, Morristown, Ogdensburg, and Waddington, NY, ports along the St. Lawrence River. The system provides videophones at docking areas.

Anthony R. Koziol of the Buffalo district office said the system, the first of its kind to be used within the Service,

will be used by boaters entering the United States. He said boaters are responsible for complying with the same reporting requirements as anyone attempting to enter the country.

An applicant for admission picks up the handset on the videophone, which automatically dials the inspection station or port of entry. The inspector also has a video-

phone, and each party can see and hear the other. The inspector provides the boater with directions for admission.

According to Koziol, now boaters will not be required to report in person to a POE, which could be 80 miles from where they are attempting to enter the country.

El Paso BP Seizes 1,000 lbs. of Marijuana

Continuing INS' achievements in what likely will be a record year for drug seizures, Border Patrol agents in the El Paso, TX, sector interdicted a truck carrying more than 1,000 pounds of marijuana valued at \$818,000.

The truck was observed in late June by Agents Mike Saucedo, Ralph Ramirez, and Ivonne Padilla after it tripped a sensor in a remote area of the sector. After stopping the truck, Agent Saucedo smelled marijuana and found cello-

phane-wrapped bundles in the vehicle's utility boxes. Agents arrested the truck driver and released the bundles to the area's DEA Task Force officer.

Denver D+D Conference

FOCUSES ON MANAGING NEW RESOURCES

More than 70 INS managers attended the Service's Detention and Deportation (D+D) conference June 24-26 in Aurora, CO, a Denver suburb.

Joan Higgins, assistant commissioner for Detention and Deportation addressed the conference, citing factors that have affected the D&D program positively, including the strengthening of INS enforcement capability, the infusion of new resources, and the enactment of immigration reform legislation.

Keynote speaker Commissioner Doris Meissner commended the D&D program for its accomplishments in removals. She urged attendees to "continue to work closely together to reach goals and strive for a firm, but fair, enforcement of INS laws." She noted that in the past year removals continued at a record pace, new removal measures were enacted in a timely manner, a comprehensive approach to long-range resource planning was taken, and efforts were made to augment long-term, multi-year detention space.

General Counsel David Martin and Acting Executive Associate Commissioner for Programs Paul Virtue presented updates on the new immigration legislation and its effect on the D&D program. Phyllis Coven, director of the Office of International Affairs briefed

participants on new procedures to notify countries prior to the return of some aliens. These procedures, along with the issuance of travel documents, escort policy, detention facility accreditation, and detention standards were discussed during workshops.

Ron Collison, associate commissioner for Information Resources Management (HQIRM), reported on the Detention and Deportation Optimization System, an innovative technology that will automate the process of locating and reserving bed space and arranging transportation for detainees. The project is being developed jointly by D&D and HQIRM. Collison also discussed the Detention Management System, an electronic system for moni-

toring and managing detainees.

Other conference speakers included EOIR Director Anthony Moscato, who reported on the activities of the Executive Office for Immigration Review; Jeff Weber, assistant commissioner in the Office of Budget, who gave a budget overview; and Cathy Kasch, deputy assistant commissioner in the Office of Human Resources and Development, who made a presentation on staffing and training. Attendees were then invited to tour the contract detention facility in Aurora.

Denver Director Joe Greene, Deputy Director Mike Comfort, and Assistant District Director for Detention and Deportation Doug Maurer provided conference support.



Among the issues discussed at this year's Detention and Deportation conference was technology needs and implementation. (Photo by Mitch Katz, HQ Public Affairs)

'Progress in the Midst of Change' Is Investigations Conference Theme

By Ron Dodson
HQ Office of Investigations

"Progress in the Midst of Change—Strategies for the Future," was the theme of INS' annual Assistant District Directors for Investigations (ADDI) conference held in San Antonio, TX, June 24-26.

Joseph Greene, acting chief of the Enforcement Branch in the Headquarters Office of Field Operations gave the opening address, and speakers, presenters, and panel participants who followed provided informative insights and opportunities for thought-provoking discussion among Investigations' national, regional, and field managers.

Breakout sessions during the conference explored implementation and responsibilities under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the Victim-Witness Assistance Act. Panel discussions addressed management and infrastructure issues including control of alien informants and witnesses, development of ideas and strategies to improve worksite enforcement, identification and removal of incarcerated aliens, investigation of benefit fraud, alien smuggling, terrorism and criminal organizations, and ways to manage Investigations' resources.

James D. Chadwick, chief of Dalton, GA, police, described a successful, innovative community-based policing initiative that united Dalton police officers and an INS special agent in a Joint Immigration Task Force to deal with a growing alien population in the small community.

Five awards were presented to field offices for outstanding Investigations casework:

- The Atlanta district office was recognized for its outstanding efforts during "Operation Clean U.S./Sparta." Special agents conducted a highly complex two-

year worksite enforcement investigation of a multimillion dollar janitorial firm that was importing and illegally employing Eastern European workers;

- The Denver district office was recognized for its outstanding accomplishments during "Operation Mountain Passes." Agents intercepted 95 smuggling loads, apprehended 1,238 undocumented aliens, seized 46 vehicles, and concluded 22 prosecutions successfully;
- The Louisville, KY, suboffice was recognized for its work in "Operation Valle Verde," a worksite enforcement investigation focused on a large poultry-processing corporation;
- The Seattle district office was recognized for "Operation Wiseguy" and "Operation On Track." These investigations highlighted the importance of professionally applied basic investigative techniques combined with solid follow-through to arrive at a successful conclusion; and
- The Tucson sector's Anti-Smuggling units were recognized for their accomplishments in an ongoing investigation.

In addition, the Western Region's Office of Investigations was recognized for its continued administration and support of the "CAL/DOJ" Fingerprint Flagging Project.

Commissioner Meissner presented the keynote address and later spoke with many conference attendees individually.

The Office of Investigations offered thanks for the support of San Antonio District Director Kenneth L. Pasquarell, San Antonio Administrative Program Officer Marjorie Allen, and other members of the San Antonio district office.

NY District Naturalizes 5,500 During 'Spirit of '97' Celebration

*By Dawn DiAngelo
New York District Public
Affairs*

Spacious skies hovered over Hofstra University's football stadium July 4, providing the perfect backdrop for the New York district's 'Spirit of '97' Independence Day naturalization ceremony. Candidates from 18 to 92 years old, representing 108 countries, took the oath, which was administered by Deputy District Director Mary Ann Gantner.

The candidates had previously been welcomed to the ceremony with waving flags and opening remarks by

Assistant Director for Adjudications Richard Berryman. "Over five thousand of you have chosen to become citizens at the largest ceremony for the district in recent memory," he told the cheering crowd. Later in the ceremony, keynote speaker Sen. Alphonse D'Amato offered congratulatory remarks and participated in a special presentation of the naturalization certificates. The participation of INS' JFK Color Guard added to the richness of the event.

The true meaning of the day's events was echoed in vocalist Bettina Pennon's renditions of the National Anthem and "America the Beautiful," while the U.S. Military Academy's "Jazz Knights" band provided musical support. A traditional fireworks display filled the mid-day sky, reflecting the spirit of the holiday.

Said Rose Chapman, the district's chief of naturalization after the ceremony, "It was truly a great day and a proud moment for the candidates and their families to be here on the Fourth of July."



Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell gave the keynote speech at the 35th annual July 4 naturalization ceremony at Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello, in Charlottesville, VA. Sixty-four immigrants from 31 countries were sworn in as U.S. citizens at the ceremony. The oath was given by Samuel Wilson, chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the western district of Virginia. (Photo courtesy of Monticello)

Special Ceremonies Highlight Fourth of July in Boston District

By Paula Grenier
Boston District Public Affairs

The Fourth of July in Boston was a day to celebrate the birth of our nation, but this year it also marked the naturalization of 502 new citizens in the district.

The district sponsored three naturalization ceremonies on the Fourth: in historic Faneuil Hall, aboard the USS Constitution, and in Shapiro House at the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH.

Faneuil Hall, one of the nation's most historic meeting halls, was the setting for the naturalization of 453 area residents. Red, white, and blue balloons decorated the hall as District Director Steven Farquharson swore in the new citizens. The Honorable Joseph Moakley of the U.S. House of Representatives gave the keynote address.

On-deck aboard the USS Constitution in Boston Harbor later in the day, 29 immigrants became U.S. citizens. District Adjudications Officer Paula Corbin made the Motion for Citizenship for the candidates in front of Judge Richard G. Sterns of the U.S. District Court in Boston. The judge administered the oath of allegiance, and the new citizens and their guests were treated to a cruise on "Old Ironsides," the oldest commissioned warship in the U.S. Navy, during her

annual turnaround in the harbor.

Shapiro House in Portsmouth, NH, was the site of the district's third ceremony of the day. Supervisory District Adjudications Officer Myra



Deborah Lowe (left), U.S. district court naturalizations clerk, and Paula Corbin, district adjudications officer, joined the captain of the USS Constitution, the U.S. Navy's oldest commissioned vessel, for the ship's annual turnaround following Boston's July 4 nautical naturalization ceremony.

Strauss made the Motion for Citizenship, and 20 New Hampshire-area candidates were sworn in by Joseph A. Di Clerico, chief judge of the U.S. District Court in Concord, NH. Shapiro House is dedicated to the memory of two Russian-Jewish immigrants, an appropriate background for a naturalization ceremony.

INS' Nairobi Office Increases Staff, BUILDS ON PAST SUCCESS



Assistant OIC
James E. Lassiter

The Nairobi, Kenya, regional office, established in 1988 in the U.S. embassy in response to mass refugee migrations from Ethiopia, has a mission to process refugees in Africa. The congressionally approved ceiling for refugee admissions to the United States from Africa this fiscal year is 7,000.

Immigration inspectors in INS' international suboffice in Nairobi interview refugee applicants and adjudicate refugee applications of individuals referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or other U.S. embassies for possible resettlement in the United States. This process is coordinated with the regional refugee coordinator and the Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA) based in Nairobi.

Expanded Operations. Last year, in response to initiatives established by the INS and State Department-led Interagency Working Group on Alien Smuggling, the Nairobi office expanded its regional enforcement and immigration control activities. Through efforts of Immigration Control Officer Adonis Rubenstein, the office in FY97 has trained more than 85 airline, consular, and host-country personnel in Kenya, Namibia, and South Africa in fraudulent document detection; distributed intelligence information on trends, methods, and routes of illegal smuggling organizations operating in Africa; and forwarded examples of genuine civil documents from Kenya, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast to the Service's Forensic Document Laboratory as benchmarks for determining the authenticity of documents.

By the end of the year, Rubenstein expects that document training also will be conducted in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and the Ivory Coast, and that genuine civil documents will be collected from Tanzania, Uganda, Benin, and Ghana.

New Personnel Growth. Until 1996, the Nairobi office was staffed with only two officers, an officer in charge and an assistant officer in charge. The current officers, Joseph P. Martin and James E. Lassiter, conduct most of the refugee processing in Kenya, and they

make frequent circuit rides to west, central, and southern Africa and the Greater Horn. They also coordinate the management and supervision of office personnel, who work closely with the State Department's African consular posts on visa, adjudications, and fraud issues.

With expanded staff resources, the office now is working more effectively than ever on immigration enforcement issues, while maintaining high-quality refugee and adjudications work throughout Africa.



If you work in an international office, we would like to receive (and publish) a postcard from you. Send them to the address on the back of this newsletter.

Awards News

San Ysidro, Otay Mesa Ports Commended for Efficiency

A year-and-a-half after INS helped organize the Binational Advisory Council for the San Diego/Tijuana Land Ports of Entry (POE) to encourage improved port operations, the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa POEs received awards for increasing efficiency in border-crossing operations.

The awards were presented to INS at the Forum Fronterizo in San Diego. Charles E. Nathanson, executive director of San Diego Dialogue, the organization that collects and analyzes port data for the council, made the June 20 presentation. According to Nathanson, in March 1996 almost two-thirds of all border crossings at San Ysidro and Otay Mesa took more than 20 minutes; today more than 80 percent of the crossings take 20 minutes or less. The average waiting time at the POEs has decreased by 60 percent since March 1996.

Sharing the award with INS were the U.S. Customs Service, U.S. Attorney's Office in San Diego, Mexican immigration service, and Mexican consulate.

"These agencies exemplify the substance and spirit of interagency and cross-border cooperation," Nathanson said when the awards were presented.



San Diego District Director Mark K. Reed (left) and U.S. Attorney for San Diego Allen Bersin show off their awards recognizing improvements in traffic management at the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa ports of entry. At right is U.S. Customs Management Center Director Rudy Camacho, whose office shared in the award.

Sacramento Suboffice Wins Hammer Award

INS' Sacramento, CA, suboffice has become the agency's seventeenth National Performance Review Hammer Award winner for its cooperation with the state's Social Security administration (SSA).

Sacramento Officer-in-Charge Lionel Nurse and northern California SSA head Martin Almanzan were recognized in late

June for ground-breaking changes in the way Social Security copes with the administrative challenges of the recent welfare reform legislation. The system developed by Nurse and Almanzan allows INS to notify Social Security as supplemental security income (SSI) recipients are naturalized, saving thousands of people from

receiving erroneous SSI cut-off letters.

The partnership also includes working directly with county welfare officials and community organizations throughout northern California to help them understand the changes that have come with the implementation of the new welfare legislation.

P e o p l e o n t h e M o v e



Winona Varnon



George E. Regan Jr.

At Headquarters:

Paul Virtue, formerly INS's acting executive associate commissioner for Programs, has been named by the Commissioner as the Service's associate commissioner for Program Development within the new Office of Policy and Programs. The position was created as a result of the 1997 reorganization plan, which is subject to approval by the Office of Management and Budget and the Congress.

Virtue is a 14-year INS veteran and previously held the positions of assistant general counsel, associate general counsel, and deputy general counsel, a post he was appointed to in October 1988.

Winona Varnon, previously acting director of the Office of Security within the Office of Management, has been named director. A 12-year INS veteran, Varnon began her career as a legal intern in the Headquarters Office of Equal Employment

Opportunity (EEO). From 1987 to 1990 she was an EEO specialist in the Discrimination Complaints Branch. Later she was named chief of the branch, and in 1993 she was appointed EEO deputy director. She was appointed EEO director in 1995, and served in that capacity until November 1995, when she became acting deputy director of Security. She was named acting director of Security in April 1996.

George E. Regan Jr., assistant commissioner for Intelligence and acting associate commissioner for Enforcement, has retired after more than 25 years with INS. Beginning his career with the Border Patrol as an agent in Eagle Pass, TX, Regan moved to the New

York district office in 1974, working in a variety of investigative capacities. He became a regional staff officer in the eastern region office in 1983, including working as acting assistant regional commissioner for Investigations and assistant regional commissioner for Intelligence. After transferring to Headquarters, he worked as an Intelligence staff officer and was named acting assistant commissioner for Intelligence, assuming the post permanently in 1986. He was named acting associate commissioner for Enforcement in November of 1996.

He expects to take a private-sector position in either the security or investigations field after leaving the Service.



Paul Virtue has been named as associate commissioner for Program Development.

Communi^{INS}que

The *INS Communique* is published by the Headquarters Office of Public Affairs to inform employees of the Immigration and Naturalization Service about official and unofficial activities. Readers are invited to submit articles, photographs, and letters to the editor. Write to INS Public Affairs, Washington, DC 20536; or ☎ (202) 514-2648.

News updates are posted on the INS NEWSLINE at: ☎ (202) 616-1994. This newsletter and other useful information are available also on the Internet through the INS web site at <http://www.ins.usdoj.gov>.

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Editor

Cover: El Paso Border Patrol agent Andrea Dokes surveys the United States/Mexico border on her ATV. As a Texas Border Patrol agent, she will make up part of the Service's new 'Operation Rio Grande' which was announced in Brownsville in late July. (See story on page 5) (Photo for INS by Bill Powers)